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MEDITATING WITH MY EYES OPEN

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Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

This evening, as the day began to cool, I laid back in my hammock to breathe in and conduct a nice, calming meditation in Focus 12. I decided to meditate with my eyes open as I gazed at the puffy clouds and lightly swaying treetops above me. If you've never kept your eyes open during a meditation before, I highly recommend giving it a try.

The first time I kept my eyes open during a meditation exercise was in **Exploration 27**. As we explored Earth Core in one of the exercises, we were encouraged to head out into nature and meditate while walking through the greenery of Roberts Mountain Retreat at the Monroe Institute. It was an impactful experience for me. I remember vividly seeing everything in a soft haze. Colors were more vibrant and I was more sensitive to the light and energy of the natural world. I felt each breeze as if it were the first time I stepped outside into the wind. It deepened my appreciation for the world that we call home.

So, occasionally I'll conduct a walking meditation or meditate outside in nature with my eyes wide open, as I did tonight. I laid across my hammock and conducted my preparatory process with eyes closed. As I breathed into Focus 12 and felt myself arrive at this slightly expanded state, I opened my eyes to stare at the sky and watch leaves fall lightly around me. For anyone looking to relieve stress, I can't recommend meditating out in nature enough.

One of the first things I noticed was how very vivid everything seemed. As I watched the striking blue sky above, each falling leaf looked more vibrant than the last. Yet somehow, there appeared to be a hazy filter painting the environment around me, as well. I associate this with being more perceptive of energy and light. As the breeze tussled my hair, I could almost see the energy on the movement of the wind. I could see the particles, leaves, and energetic footprint move around me, reminding me that we are all connected through some unseen force.

Are there benefits to open-eye meditation, besides it just being interesting? To me, when I meditate with my eyes closed, I can end the exercise feeling disconnected from the present world. My head can sometimes stay in the clouds, so to speak. When I meditate in nature with my eyes open, I feel more grounded and connected to the world around me. I enjoy many of the same benefits of my normal meditation practice while remaining fully present afterwards, which helps me jump back into my life very quickly. It also allows me to relax into a very deep state without fear of falling asleep. It provides a level of active focus while still giving my mind the rest it needs, which can help keep me present in the exercise. Sometimes I find myself extremely distracted from my intentions, but when my eyes are open, I retain just enough focus to check in and remind myself of my intention from time to time.

If for no other reason than to satiate your curiosity, try meditating in nature with your eyes open and see how it can affect you. Be sure to pick a safe space, preferably private (perhaps in your yard if you have one), where you can get comfortable. A hammock, lounge chair, or maybe a blanket on the grass would provide a view of the sky as you meditate. Find a safe, happy space that resonates with you. Note how it's different than your normal practice, and journal what you do or do not like about it afterwards.

Our meditation practices are fluid and continually change and evolve as we try new experiences. That's one reason why I love the **Expand app** so much—there are many new exercises to try that nudge our practice to grow and evolve. For this one, be sure to set the Timer section of Expand to Focus 12 and have a pleasant time experimenting with open eyes.